



Monday, October 29, 2012

**READ-** The Old Testament: Isaiah 25:6-9

After God speaks to Job from the whirlwind, Job expresses his regret and humility in the presence of a great and omnipotent God. He confesses that he now understands there are simply things we humans cannot understand about God ways and power. And God restores all he has lost plus more.

**REFLECT-**

- There are many things about the suffering of this life that we cannot understand, but we can always be assured that God is with us through it all, giving us strength and restoring us in many ways. How has God lifted you up and restored you in times of suffering?

**PRAY-**

Lord, we thank you that although you are God of the universe, you still love and care for us and will never leave us. Amen.

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 24

This psalm is a Jewish festival psalm celebrating God's good creation, the entrance of his faithful people into his holy place, and then God's triumphal entry into his temple. The gates of the temple are commanded to open wide for God and his chosen people.

**REFLECT-**

- This psalm encourages its readers to have "clean hands" and "pure hearts" so that we may merit entry into God's holy presence. Yet we know that we cannot do this without God's mercy. Our best efforts to live faithfully and obediently are important; yet only through God's great mercy and love are we assured of a place in his presence.

**PRAY-**

Lord, we give you thanks for your love, power and care over us and all your creation. Amen.

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

**READ-** The Epistle: Revelation 21:1-6a

This passage is part of our United Methodist liturgy for services of death and resurrection because it speaks beautifully of the hope we have for eternal life in the future. John foresaw in this vision the time in which all suffering and death are no more and all God's people and creation live together in perfect peace.

**REFLECT-**

- What feelings does this passage evoke in you when you read it? Do you feel fearful or comforted? What do you imagine it will be like when "God dwells with his people"? Are you able to embrace this vision with confidence that you will be present on that day?

**PRAY-**

Father, we are often afraid of the unknown. Help me to be confident in your love and forgiveness and live each day as if it were my last so that when that new heaven and earth come, I will be there. Amen.

Thursday, November 1, 2012

**READ-** The Gospel: John 11:32-44

Even in their grief, Mary and Martha testify to their love and faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Yet, like Ezekiel and the dry bones, they cannot conceive that Jesus has the power to raise their brother. The disciples and all the mourners see God's power expressed in the man Jesus Christ.

**REFLECT-**

- This miracle Jesus did served to write his own death sentence with the religious authorities. Jesus obviously knew the implications of his actions. He was obedient to God every step of the way. What does being obedient to God's will mean for you today?

**PRAY-**

O God, what do you have for me to do today? Guide my steps and help me learn to submit my own will to yours for I know that all things are possible for those who believe and follow you. Amen.

Friday, November 2, 2012

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** John 11:37

..."Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Three of our four lections this week deal with death, suffering and God "wiping away the tears" from his beloved people. We do not understand why good people suffer; we do not understand why some are healed as Lazarus was and some die. Yet we see from this passage, that Jesus' desire is always healing. We can be agents of God's healing, comfort and strength for others. We cannot always heal their physical hurts; but we can come alongside them, sharing their suffering, offering words of comfort and encouragement and simple helps like a meal or driving someone to a treatment session. Who do you know who is suffering and needs someone to care? Find a way today to offer the love of Christ to that person.